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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA [US/US]; 12th floor, 1111 Franklin Street, Oakland, CA 94607-5200 (US).

(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): SELSTED, Michael, E. [US/US]; 16 Young Court, Irvine, CA 92612 (US). TANG, Yi-Quan [CN/US]; 22 Schubert Court, Irvine, CA 92612 (US). YUAN, Jun [CN/US]; 34 Club Vista, Dove Canyon, CA 92679 (US). OUELLETTE, Andre, J. [US/US]; 32 Harvey Court, Irvine, CA 92612 (US).

(US).

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(54) Title: ANTIMICROBIAL THETA DEFENSINS AND METHODS OF USING SAME

(57) Abstract

present ·invention peptide, relates isolated cyclic theta defensin. having. antimicroto an ' defensin activity, and to theta analogs. theta defensin can have the amino acid Xaal-Xaa2-Xaa3-Xaa4-Xaa5-Xaa1-Xaa6-Xaa4-Xaa4-Xaa1-Xaa1-Xaa6-Xaa4-Xaa5-Xaa1-Xaa3-Xaa7-Xaa8, to Xaa8 are defined; wherein Xaa1 can be linked through a peptide bond to Xaa8; and wherein crosslinks can be formed between Xaa3 and Xaa3, between Xaa5 and Xaa5, and between Xaa7 and Xaa7. For example, the invention provides a theta defensin having the amino acid sequence Gly-Phe-Cys-Arg-Cys-Leu- Cys-Arg-Arg-Gly-Val-Cys-Arg-Cys-Ile-Cys-Thr-Arg (SEQ ID NO:1), wherein the Gly at position 1 (Gly-1) is linked through a peptide bond to Arg-18, and wherein disulfide bonds are present between Cys-3 and Cys-16, between Cys-5 and Cys-14, and between Cys-7 and Cys-12. The invention also provides nucleic acids encoding theta defensins and antibodies that specifically bind a theta defensin. In addition, the invention relates to methods of using theta defensin to reduce or inhibit microbial growth or survival.